THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) No decision as such has so far been taken.

(c) and (d) Planning Commission has set up a Committee on Bio-fuel which has not submitted its report so far.

Impact of Crude prices on Oil Import

713. SHRI R. P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the impact of the recent increase in international crude oil prices on POL imports and the balance of trade;

(b) to what extent, the subsidies on POL have gone up; and

(c) whether there is a proposal to increase domestic POL prices in order to reduce subsidies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) A comparison of the quantum and value of the imports of crude oil and petroleum products during the period April—November 2002 with April —November 2001 is given below:

Period	Quantum of imports (in MMT*)	Value of Imports (in million US$)
April-November 2002	60.902	11,383.20
April-November 2001	55.116	9,676.80

*Million Metric Tonnes

(b) and (c) As of now, only PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG are subsidized products. Against the subsidy level of Rs. 4.05/liter and Rs. 115.63/cylinder respectively in the year 2001-02 on PDS Kerosene and domestic LPG, the corresponding subsidy in 2002-03 has come down to Rs. 2.45/litre and Rs. 67.75/cylinder respectively. Further, the existing subsidy will be phased out in the next three to five years.

Enhancement of Gas Production

714. SHRI R. P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a comprehensive plan has been formulated to double the gas production in the country in the next five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, with the present status of its implementation;

(c) whether it is a fact that detailed block-by-block analysis has been carried out to identify the areas with huge potential and the oil and gas major would be advised to carry out their drilling operations there; and

(d) if so, the details of the region-wise studies carried out so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) As per Tenth Plan, natural gas production in the country is projected to increase from about 31.6 Billion Cubic Meter (BCM) in the first year (2002-03) of Tenth plan to about 37.6 BCM in the terminal year (2006-07) of the Tenth Plan, *i.e.* an increase of about 19%. However, as a result of major gas discoveries made by various companies recently, the actual production of gas may increase further.

(c) and (d) For the areas under exploration by National Oil Companies and Private/Joint Venture Companies under Production Sharing Regime, work programme commitments are given by the companies in their successful bids, which are based on the assessment and appraisal by the bidders of the prospectivity of the block as modified by results of further surveys and discoveries.

Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) prepares data packages based on existing data gathered by National Oil Companies and pre-exploratory surveys by the DGH, to attract Exploration and Production Companies for bidding under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP).

Exploration of gas and oil in Barmer (Rajasthan)

715. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether gas and oil reserves have struck during exploration to the Barmer District in Rajasthan recently; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?